



NEW FOREST ASSOCIATION

Newsletter
Summer 2011



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Cover picture: Ponies in the pond at Clayhill.

Photo Graham Long

DIARY DATES

SUMMER WALKS

Wednesday 17th August meet Fritham Car Park G.R. SU 230140, 6.00 p.m. *Eric Ashby's bench and Sumner's finds*. Leader Ann Biffin. Approximately two and a half hours.

Tuesday 6th September meet Turf Hill Car Park G.R. SU 212177, 6.00 p.m. *Pylons and Plantations*. Leaders Peter Roberts and Phil Marshall. Approximately an hour and a half.

All welcome but *no dogs* please.

Expect some mud and uneven ground. Bring a guest by all means.

Walks will take place whatever the weather.

The contact for both is Peter Roberts on 01725 514480.

SUMMER SHOW STANDS

We will have stands at the following shows this summer.

Sway (8th July), *New Forest* (26th-28th July),

Frogham (27th August), *Romsey* (10th September),

New Forest Festival (25th September).

Do call in.

We'd value your views on the Association and the Newsletter.

BBQ

Sunday, 2nd October at Anderwood

The BBQ site at Anderwood has been booked for the Association. Cook-up will commence at 2.00 p.m. ***Please bring your own food and drink.*** This event is open to all. Members of the Association will be on hand from about 10.00 a.m. to lead walks through the adjacent woodland. *[Note: This notice amends the information given in the printed version of the Newsletter.]*

Mia Culpa

As Chairman I had various duties to perform at the AGM and for nine of my ten year office I don't think I forgot any of them. Some of these duties were more important than others and some not really duties as I would have wished to have done them anyway. One of the most important was to acknowledge and thank, on behalf of the Association and myself personally, Council members and others who have helped the Association not just by word but by deed as well.

At my tenth and final AGM I totally forgot to do this and wish to amend this by apologising and making clear my appreciation for the work carried out by the three Council members who stepped down from the Council this year.

They were, Georgina Babey, Val Thorpe and Hilary Harper. They had all served on the Council for varying lengths of time and had given of their time freely. In particular, and I trust the other two will forgive me for singling her out, Georgina Babey deserves special thanks for her time and effort as Chairman of the Membership and Development Committee and News Letter Editor.

When I took over the chair the newsletter was nearly defunct and I acted as editor for some years. Georgina then took on the role and the improvement was immediate. From personal experience I know how time consuming the role can be and am deeply appreciative of the energy and professionalism she brought to it.

I could not have fulfilled my role of Chairman without the help and support of my Council and would like to take this opportunity to again thank, not just these three, but all those who helped and supported me over the last ten years.

William Ziegler
Ex Chairman

MEET THE OUR NEW CHAIRMAN



At the first Council Meeting after the AGM I was elected chairman. The following is a potted history of my Forest background.

I have been on the Council for more than 20 years, introduced by David Stagg, who also persuaded me to take part in CPRE activities becoming the chairman of the NF district branch for a time. I was for six years the Amenity Verderer in the 1990s and have represented the NFA at local level on the Consultative Panel as well as nationally on the council of the Campaign for National Parks.

I am a past president of the Hampshire Field Club which is the county's foremost history society. I have written a number of articles and books on the area and, with Richard Reeves was responsible for five volumes in the New Forest Record Series published by the New Forest Centre. I spent twenty years running an electrical retail business in Hythe before turning to recycling. With my partner, Georgina Babey, I ran a second hand bookshop in Ashurst for 10 years and following a spell working in the Christopher Tower Library in Lyndhurst now work freelance. I give talks, do local and family history research and write the odd article.

I was born at Hythe a long time ago when ponies roamed down to the shore as well as the road where I lived. I turned inland and enjoyed the Forest from as long as I can remember. I have camped, walked, cycled and orienteered on it over the years. I am still a keen walker, though now often move more slowly carrying a camera looking at the way the landscape has changed over time.

A TIME OF TRANSITION

I see my role as doing the bidding of the members of the Association through the Council they have elected. We are in a process of transition with a new committee, the Finance and General Purposes, steering and implementing all matters not within the remit of the Land Management and Planning. Beyond that it is a matter of providing the right conditions to reach towards our aims and objectives. The revised Agenda (policy) launched at the AGM is a major tool, a yardstick against which we can measure our success. We will need to make greater use of modern technologies perhaps re-working our website and make use of twitter, facebook and blogs to reach out to an audience that often has its head buried in a computer screen or iphone.

One area I believe we need to work on is ensuring that our key message of protecting the Forest for future generations reaches as many people as possible. To do that we need to educate a new generation to the fragility of the New Forest, to show them that unless they protect it there will be nothing for their children to conserve and enjoy. We need new



Members visit Millyford Bridge to learn about the importance of debris dams.

Photo Graham Long

members, of all ages, and fresh blood on Council, to invigorate it, with new ideas, new ways of working and of course enthusiasm

It follows that we need to be a part of the education process and to hold more events for our members that will also encourage others to join. One of the problems of being 144 years old is that we are seen as a venerated body, a source of wisdom but little action. By the time we reach 150 I want us to be able to celebrate a re-birth of all that matters to ensure the Forest is in good condition and safeguarded for generations to come.

Peter Roberts
Chairman

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE REPORT

Two meetings have been held since the AGM in an attempt to reflect members' views of priority actions. Work is in progress to gain access to a wider audience by changing our website to make it more approachable. We need to reach more people, both young and old. A new event in early October has been set up and others are in the pipeline. The website will show details on forthcoming events. Stands are planned at various shows, including Sway (8th July), New Forest (26th-28th July), Frogham (27th August) and Romsey (10th September).

Work on providing information to the Independent Panel on Forestry is progressing both directly and through other organisations such as the Campaign for National Parks. We have invited the Panel to visit the New Forest. We are also involved in following up the Lawton review and subsequent White Paper by working with the Park Authority, Forestry Commission, RSPB and Hampshire Wildlife Trust on looking at ways in which bio-diversity can be encouraged in and around the New Forest.

We are offering support to a number of initiatives, including one from the Hampshire County Council pursuing sustainable transport in the South Downs and New Forest national Parks. Another proposal by the Park Archaeology officer, Frank Green, to obtain Lottery funding for a WWII Project has also received our support.

Public Interaction We are looking at how we might take part in the New Forest festival in September; hopefully more on this in due course. We are also discussing ways of greater involvement through education, perhaps through sponsorship or providing information either directly with more talks or by helping existing education providers.

Administration We have appointed Juliet Lynn to a paid post to look after treasurer/membership work, with Michael Chilcott giving oversight. An honorary treasurer may be appointed at a later date.

Peter Roberts, *Chairman*

PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT

The planning committee continues to review all planning applications in the National Park. It also responds to the many associated documents issued by the Authority. These cover such matters as design guides, conservation areas, transport and cycling policy, minerals and waste policy. Current members come from Boldre, Brockenhurst, Ellingham, Hale and Lyndhurst and meet in one another's homes once a month. Any NFA member interested in the control of development or one of the subjects mentioned above is most welcome to come along. Contact Michael Chilcott.

The number of development applications has declined locally belatedly following the national trend. The introduction of the new plan (core strategies) has added clarity and planning officers seem keen to see the new rules enforced. Closer alignment between parishes and officers is shown by the fact that in the first six months of 2010, in 70% of the cases brought to the Authority planning committee, the parish disagreed with an *approve* recommendation, whereas in the same period this year most disagreements were where officers had recommended *refusal*.

A growing problem is to ensure planning rules have not been breached by householders, who then claim that the breach has existed for so long permission should be granted anyway. It is important to report possible abuse promptly. If you suspect a problem, please contact Graham Baker (e-mail: brookleyfarmhouse@btinternet.com) and we will investigate, and if not satisfied make a formal complaint in the name of NFA.

Graham Baker

LETTERS

Our last edition included a forceful letter from Denis Lyle arguing that the Mosaic Project should be abolished. We have received a letter from Chaz Singh urging that it be retained. Unfortunately, Chaz has not included any contact details. All letters received are subject to possible editing and the editor's discretion whether to publish, but only those with full contact details will be considered for publication.

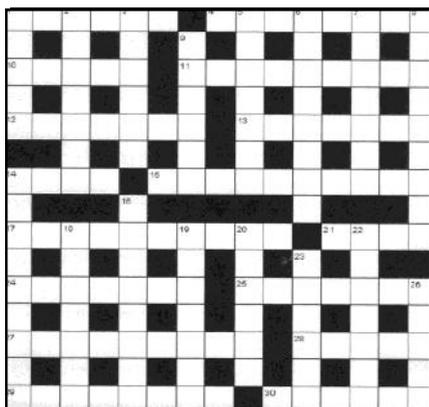
Graham Long, Editor

YOUR TEN FOR STARTERS

[William Ziegler has kindly provided a quiz to test our knowledge of the New Forest. We shall publish ten questions in each of the next few issues.]

1. Name the rights of Common on the Crown Lands of the New Forest.
2. What was Castleman's Corkscrew?
3. Which enclosure is directly between Ocknell & Milkham?
4. What is the only area within the New Forest National Park boundary which is not part of the National Park?
5. How many types of heather grow in the New Forest?
6. What perks do the Verderers enjoy?
7. In which year did William 1st make the New Forest a "Royal Hunting preserve"?
8. Which famous author is buried at Minstead?
9. Who made a present to the Nation of the New Forest for the Millennium?
10. In what year was the Commoners Defence Association formed?

The answers are on page 15.



Do we have anyone in our membership who would like to prepare a New Forest themed crossword puzzle for inclusion in our Newsletters; that is, two or three puzzles per year? If so, please contact the editor to make the necessary arrangements

HEYWOOD SUMNER IN THE NEW FOREST

Anne Biffin

A bearded gentleman on a bicycle, sketch book in hand, pedalling along the New Forest tracks, would have been a familiar sight in the early years of the 20th century. This was George Heywood Maunior Sumner, artist and self-taught archaeologist. Born in 1853 in Old Alresford, Hampshire, the son of George an Anglican minister, and Mary Heywood, founder of the Mothers' Union. He was a man of many talents. A member of the Arts and Crafts movement, he was an expert linear artist, designer of textiles and wallpapers, stained glass and mosaic. Another interest was in the newly revived Italian art of sgraffiti, the incising of designs into coloured plaster.

In the early 20th century, he left London and brought his wife Agnes and five children back to Hampshire. They settled at South Gorley, near Fordingbridge, at Cuckoo Hill, a house Sumner designed and had built. It was fitted with pine needle closets instead of flush toilets which aroused much local interest. One would hope these have been replaced. Today Cuckoo Hill is a residence for people with learning difficulties, and called Heywood Sumner House.

At this time he began to record daily events in the Forest in the Book of Gorley, an affectionate look at the customs, history and people of the area. The first chapter begins appropriately with the purchase of land and building of Cuckoo Hill, recording in meticulous detail the plans, cost, materials used and local suppliers. An abridged version Cuckoo Hill, the Book of Gorley has been produced in facsimile in Sumner's own hand, and is generously illustrated with his precise water colours. His affinity with nature and the New Forest is evident in his drawings, lovingly executed, and touches of the graphic artist can be seen in the decorative borders.

In the Book of Gorley, we are presented with a series a delightful vignettes of life in Sumner's day. He had great respect and admiration for the Forest folk eking out a living from the poor soil, and took a craftsman's delight in their methods of husbandry and traditions. One

of his neighbours clipped his yew hedges into foliage posies, and Sumner was so taken with this he incorporated them into some of his wallpaper designs.

He took an active part in community life, helping with the controlled burning of furze. This was sometimes accompanied by explosions as cartridges dropped during army manoeuvres in 1898 went off.

In 1911 Sumner began the daunting task of surveying earthworks in Hampshire and Dorset. When his map was published in 1923, he had



covered an area of some 1,200 square miles. His draughtsmanship is unsurpassed. A few years later his attention turned to the Romano British pottery sites in the New Forest. Unlike his predecessors, he was anxious to excavate an undisturbed kiln in order to discover more of the Roman pottery production and the lifestyle of the potters. Working mainly

Recent excavation near Cuckoo Hill

Photo Graham Long

alone, he succeeded in accomplishing this and it is in this area of archaeology that he is best remembered.

Chance sometimes throw up evidence of kiln workings or pottery sherds. Sumner's attention was drawn to one such site following the death of a keeper's pony. The pit being dug for its burial revealed layers of ash and potsherd. Although the kilns had broken down, some distinctive previously unrecorded types of pottery were discovered. All the vessels found during Sumner's excavations were carefully recorded and illustrated, and in due course placed with the British Museum. His publication in 1927, *Excavations in New Forest Pottery Sites*, is the first major work on New Forest pottery and kilns.

Sumner occasionally produced local papers which were eventually published in 1931, often accompanied by a map to which whimsical touches would be added. A group of picnickers with their car on the grass verge is shown on a map of hill top ponds together with a gentle reminder in verse to leave the place tidy. On his map of Ibsley

Common near his home he has added a man ploughing with a team of horses, and a car on a forest road puffing a plume of exhaust. These little touches, with ponies and deer, make his maps a pleasure to study.

Sumner eventually retired at the age of 78 having accomplished the excavations and publication of thirteen archaeological sites. He was to enjoy a further decade of quiet retirement, still taking an active interest in local affairs and corresponding with friends. He liked to think of himself as being planted in the country rather than buried. Planting, he remarked, is followed by growth, and the countryman enjoying good health may grow old, but would grow in mental outlook.



Heywood Sumner died in 1940 at his beloved Cuckoo Hill and rests with Agnes in a quiet corner of St. Martin's churchyard, Ibsley. In springtime the plot is strewn with bright celandines which would have gladdened his countryman's heart. Of Cuckoo Hill he once said, "Whatever changes and chances life may have in store for us, I do say my grace most devoutly for having found this beautiful place and for having accomplished this piece of work." A more fitting epitaph could not have been written.



Photos Graham Long

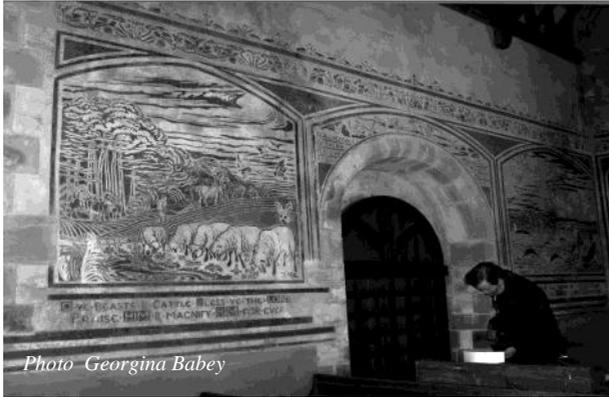
The grave
at St. Martin's, Ibsley

Sources

Sumner, Heywood. *Excavations in New Forest Pottery Sites*, Chiswick Press, 1927.
Sumner, Heywood. *Local Papers*, Chiswick Press, 1931.
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Cunliffe, Barry. *Heywood Sumner's Wessex*, Ray Gasson Associates, 1985.

Sumner's Sgraffitos at Llanfair Kilgeddin

A footnote to Anne Biffin's article on Heywood Sumner



Peter and I travelled to South East Wales earlier this year especially to see the church of St Mary the Virgin at Llanfair Kilgeddin, the interior walls of which are covered with extraordinary sgraffitos designed by Heywood Sumner. The church stands in an isolated position, in a tiny Monmouthshire community, with the River Usk running nearby. Sumner was commissioned to produce a memorial to Rosamund Lindsay, wife of the Rev. William Lindsay, vicar of the church, and the sgraffitos were completed in 1888. Taking the Benedicite as his theme, Sumner applied thin layers of different coloured plaster, and then cut back to reveal the colours underneath, giving a 'relief' effect. His designs include local features - the River Usk and Sugar Loaf hill. The church had fallen into disuse and, in the 1980s, was saved from demolition by the intervention of a London-based charity called 'The Friends of Friendless Churches', founded in 1957. In 2006 the church was designated a Grade I listed building, and, of Sumner's work, it has been said "they should make Llanfair Kilgeddin a place of pilgrimage for disciples of the Arts and Crafts movement" - indeed they do!

Georgina Babey

(Note: a coloured photograph of Sumner's expertise in this unusual art form is on the rear cover.)

WE'D BE LOST WITHOUT FUNGI

The New Forest has the most important areas of pasture woodland, heathland and valley mires in Europe, and is home to a large range of species. It is one of the most important areas for biodiversity in Britain – with a full and wonderful variety of life (flora and fauna, or plants and animals).

In the five kingdom classification of life, fungi are recognised now to be in a kingdom of their own and, as they have a presence in all major ecosystems, with over a million species, they are hugely important. Dr. David Minter, President of the European Mycological Association and founder of the International Society for Fungal Conservation has said that “to ignore them is not a sensible option. They are far more important to human life than we imagine.” Extra-ordinarily, when the conservation of species was last legislated fungi were omitted altogether.



Photo Graham Long

Fungi are the great nutrient recyclers of the natural world, processing leaf litter, dead wood and mammal dung and corpses. They are essential decomposers of dead organic matter or saprophytes. They are important for the healthy development of trees and plants, by enabling their roots to take up additional nutrients from the

soil, in a mutually beneficial arrangement or symbiosis. They are visually very beautiful and some amazingly colourful – extremely photogenic! Some are good to eat (and can be purchased in shops!) and some are deadly poisonous. Autumn in the New Forest would not be the same without them, with people coming from far and wide to admire them.

There was a definite population decline of fungi noticed as early as the 1970s, especially in the Netherlands, and declining yields from the most popular species collected in Europe. Natural causes account for some of the decline. However, current research in continental Europe

shows falling yields due to habitat loss, farming, forestry, pollution and recreational pressure. Rare species of fungi are particularly vulnerable as their gene pool is reduced.

Perversely, increasing pressure from collecting is focused on this diminishing resource. It is a certain that indiscriminate trampling by human feet on a regular basis is causing significantly reduced yields and irreversible damage to the fungal mycelium (or rooting system) by compaction of the soil. This destroys the delicate underground structure, changing water movement and collapsing air spaces. Removal of the fruiting bodies affects those organisms that live on, in, and around fungi, particularly those wholly dependent on particular species as a source of food. Certain fungi are an essential breeding medium for a large range of invertebrates, including many rare and threatened species.

With climate change now affecting the fruiting habits of fungi, their geographical distribution also is changing. No one yet knows if the new species being found are dangerous invaders or a sign that fungi are in need of special help. Whatever the answer to that, there must be serious doubt about the sustainability of the current level of commercial collecting. In order to protect the environment, the 'precautionary principle' (reasonably strong in its protection of flora and fauna) should be widely adopted.

Some relief in future may come from advances in research which improve the prospects for large scale commercial growing of fungi but due to their fickle nature, and the factors mentioned above, finding a solution to the problem will not be easy. We can, however, all adopt the precautionary principle. Admire the forest's fungi but resist the temptation to take them away.

Sara Cadbury

- Answers to the Quiz**
1. Mast, Marl, Pasture for Commonable Animals, Pasture for Sheep, Estover, Turbary.
 2. Railway line, Brockenhurst to Ringwood.
 3. Stuffers
 4. Fawley Oil Refinery.
 5. Four: Common heather or ling, bell heather, cross-leaved heath, Dorset heath..
 6. A Sporting Licence & a Haunch of Venison. 7. 1079.
 8. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. 9. John Prescott. 10. 1909.

THE NEW FOREST

- managed for what and by whom?

Should the Forestry Commission manage the New Forest? The Independent Panel on Forestry Policy has terms of reference that make one wonder why the New Forest is managed by the Forestry Commission. It is probably fair to call it an historic accident which started in Tudor times when the Exchequer set up a Court of Surveyors. It is from that that the present Deputy Surveyor holds his post although now under the auspices of the Forestry Commission. Its original purpose of providing timber for the nation has never really changed, although in recent decades there has been a marked increase in recreational activity and a nod to conservation.

The problem is that the New Forest is not primary timber growing country. It is a mixed environment, recognised by the Normans as a hunting area, and put under forest law to protect the deer and its habitat. However the conservation management that this implied has not been the sole remit of government policy for the last 470 years. Much of the land has never been suitable for timber production. In fact it is now recognised as being of major importance for nature conservation, in particular the wetlands and low land heaths as well as the grazed open woodlands. The Commoners stock grazing the area remain the fundamental reason for the creation and protection of the landscape we see today.

The Forestry Panel's terms of reference do not seem to refer to the New Forest where there is no scope for additional timber planting and recreational use is at an all time high. The only area that could be improved is conservation. If the New Forest was run by a body that had conservation as its remit rather than timber quotas handed down from Edinburgh its future would look much brighter. Without planting any more conifer there would be ample for the local timber mills for decades to come as much of the damage of the last 200 years was reversed. Think of a New Forest that consisted of broad leaved trees rather than the rows of inappropriate conifer. Of enclosures of deciduous woodland that breathed with life and were a pleasure to walk amongst. Perhaps Ringwood Forest could be included allowing opportunity to promote wildlife corridors.

Much of the local expertise in woodland management as well as the keepers (who maintain the link with the old Forest) would still be required. Is this pipe dreaming or is this an opportunity that we should grasp with both hands?

Peter Roberts

BOOK REVIEWS

A NEW FOREST READER

–a Companion Guide to the New Forest, its History and Landscape

Edited by Ian McKay

Hatchet Green Publishing, 2011 (ISBN 978-0-9568372-0-2) Pb. £9.99

The New Forest has a fine literary tradition, having distinguished authors who have either written from within it or against the background it provided, sometimes both, and those who have written about it. Some of the most distinguished contributions within the latter are long out of print, and some can only be obtained at considerable expense on the second-hand market. In consequence of which, their writings are becoming more and more distant from those concerned with, and for, the forest today. In the **NEW FOREST READER**, Ian McKay has chosen extracts from over 20 writers covering a period of nearly 150 years., including two from the essays of Heywood Sumner who features elsewhere in the newsletter. A must for those who want handy access into the literary riches attending our forest's history.

A photographic guide to

THE INSECTS OF THE NEW FOREST

and surrounding area

by Paul D. Brock

Pisces Publications, 2011 (ISBN 978-1-874357-46-9) £18.95.

In **THE INSECTS OF THE NEW FOREST** Paul Brock has provided us with the first comprehensive guide to the entomological extravagance to be encountered in the forest. A haversack rather than pocket guide, this sumptuously illustrated volume should stimulate interest and understanding, and hopefully add to the number of those who record what they are seeing. However, care needs to be taken when using it. The butterfly section includes some species now extinct in the forest but the text has to be followed closely to pick this out. It's so easy to use just the excellent photos in a good guide, so it needs to be remembered that picture and text are a piece. The text offers the prism through which the pictures can be used with confidence. That caveat should not in any way diminish a warm welcome for a very useful book. It would be good if it became the first of a wide-ranging series.

NEW FOREST ASSOCIATION

www.newforestassociation.org

Officers

President Oliver Crosthwaite Eyre, Warrens Estate Office,
Bramshaw, Lyndhurst, SO43 7JH
Tel: 02380 812242 e-mail: eyre@bramshaw.co.uk

Patron Belinda, Lady Montagu

Chairman Peter Roberts, Sirius, Hatchet Close, Hale,
Fordingbridge, SP6 2NF Tel: 01725 514480
e-mail: chairman:newforestassociation.co.uk

Vice John Ward, 34 Avenue Road, Lymington, SO41 9GJ

Chairman Tel: 01590 671205 e-mail: johnontrike@yahoo.co.uk

Hon Michael Chilcott, Penny Cottage, Silver Street, Emery

Secretary Down, Lyndhurst, SO43 7DX Tel: 02380 282532
e-mail: secretary@newforestassociation.org

Other Council Members

Mark Abbott, Graham Baker, Geoff Barnes, Jonathan Cox,
Roly Errington, Peter Frost, Eve Gillmon, David Humbert,
Graham Long, Dionis Macnair, Edward Marris, Philip Marshall,
Anne Millar, Timothy Moore, Richard Reeves, Neil Sanderson,
Brian Tarnoff, Jenni Tubbs, William Ziegler.

Committees

Finance and General Purposes - Chairman - Peter Roberts

Land Management - Chairman - Peter Frost

Planning - Chairman - vacant

Newsletter Graham Long, 12 Burgate Fields, Fordingbridge, SP6 1LR

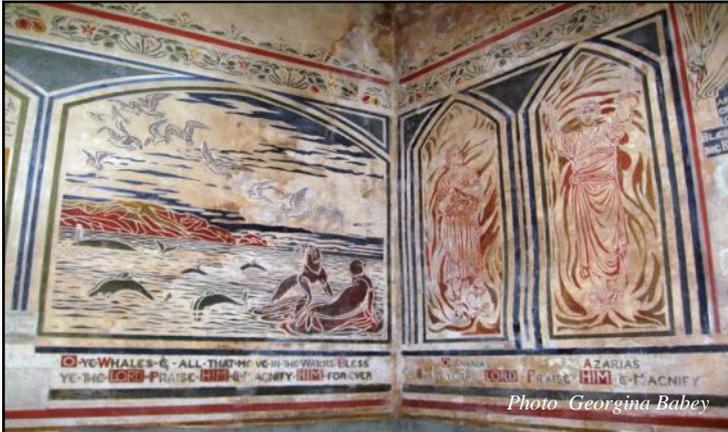
Editor Tel: 01425 653718 e-mail: grahamlong@waitrose.com



Above Neil Sanderson explains one of the finer points of streamside vegetation during the AGM's afternoon walk at Millyford Bridge .
(Photo courtesy and copyright of Mike Read)

Below A clay sculpture and money offering left beside a track on Acres Down. Has anyone an explanation for it? *(Photo Graham Long)*





Part of the mural created by Heywood Sumner
in the church of St. Mary the Virgin at Llanfair Kilgeddin

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Penny Cottage, Silver Street, Emery Down,

Lyndhurst, SO43 7DX

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Any contributions should be sent to The Editor

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